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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [COE](#) [FR](#) [GG](#) [RS](#)
SUBJECT: COE: TAGLIAVINI REPORT ON RUSSIA-GEORGIA; DEATH PENALTY
REF: STRASBOURG 23

CLASSIFIED BY: Vincent Carver, CG, Strasbourg, State.
REASON: 1.4 (b), (d)
SUMMARY

¶1. (U) Russia and Georgia traded barbs at the COE October 7 over the Tagliavini Report, with the Russian Ambassador calling on the COE to end debate on the consequences of the war. In light of the "European Day Against the Death Penalty" -- October 10 -- the COE Chair (Slovenia), the Swedish EU Presidency, and several national delegations called on other countries, including COE observer states, to abolish the death penalty. End summary

RUSSIA, GEORGIA, AND THE TAGLIAVINI REPORT
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¶2. (U) The Russian Ambassador stressed to the Council of Europe's Council of Ministers' Deputies (resident ambassadors) October 7 that the Tagliavini Report on Georgia's "large scale military operation" demonstrated that Georgia had misled the COE. Russia, he added, cannot agree with all of the report's conclusions; he called for military experts to study the accusation that Russia had used disproportionate force. The Georgian Charge retorted that Russian forces had illegally entered Georgian territory before August 7. Russia, he underscored, must meet the demands of the international community, including those of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (ref). He asked, "What should a democratic state do when military forces from another country enter its territory?"

¶3. (C) Resorting to his usual aggressive tone, the Russian Ambassador stressed, "I dare all of you to read the EU report." He added that it is time for the COE to end its discussion of the consequences of the war. Russia also criticized the previous week's Parliamentary Assembly's discussion on challenging the Russian delegation's credentials (ref). He accused some parliamentarians of using credentials as "a political weapon" and said Russia wants to build a united Europe without dividing lines. Comment: The Russian Ambassador continues his relatively successful tactic of warning that any criticism of Russia by COE bodies will escalate into a crisis for the COE; most COE member states are, in response, tempering their criticism out of fear that Moscow may one day actually fulfill its tacit threats and suspend participation in at least some COE bodies.

DEATH PENALTY: CALLING FOR UNIVERSAL BAN
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¶4. (U) The Slovenian Chair introduced a discussion of the European Day against the Death Penalty (October 10) by noting that the COE continues to urge Belarus to issue a moratorium on the use of capital punishment as a condition for Belarus' eventual membership. Slovenia stressed that a dialogue must

also continue with observer states (U.S. and Japan) on this issue. National leaders must demonstrate political courage and not be guided by opinion polls, she added, with an ultimate goal of universal abolition of capital punishment. The Swedish EU Presidency, Austria, Finland, Ireland, Norway, and Portugal made similar interventions.

OTHER ISSUES

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¶5. (U) The deputies noted that the Parliamentary Assembly will have approximately 40 observers in Ukraine for the January presidential election. The Serbian Ambassador stressed that representatives "from the so-called Kosovar Parliament" at the Parliamentary Assembly's Political Committee had been invited as "visitors."

CARVER